

Massachusetts Laboratory Response Network (LRN) Readiness Drill

Level A Bioterrorism Training for Sentinel Laboratory Partners

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Meeting the requirements of the Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) Activities

- ☐ Develop and maintain the capability of Sentinel (Level A) Laboratories - Critical Capacity #8 (CDC) linked to HRSA Priority Area #4
 - ✓ Perform rule-out testing on critical Bioterrorism (BT) agents
 - ✓ Safely package and handle specimens
 - ✓ Refer to LRN Reference/Confirmatory (level B/C) for further testing

MA LRN READINESS DRILL

❑ Exercise Objective

- ✓ **The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate the readiness and functional capacity of the LRN in Massachusetts. Readiness refers to the entire state system for handling potential biological threats and constitutes:**
 - The ability of sentinel laboratories to rule-in/rule-out an organism as a suspect bioterrorism agent
 - The ability of sentinel laboratories to follow established protocols for communication and/or reporting
 - The ability of sentinel laboratories to properly package and ship specimens
 - The ability of the State Laboratory Institute to follow established protocols for communication and/or reporting
 - The readiness of the State Laboratory Institute to effectively manage potential biothreat incidents

❑ Exercise Description

- ✓ A package consisting of three case studies accompanied by three challenges, one simulating *Bacillus anthracis*, was sent to 18 hospital microbiology laboratories and to SLI reference laboratory on 8/9/04
- ✓ Directions to the hospitals explained the importance of working up the challenges in “real time”, following routine protocols and procedures for any suspect biothreat agent.
 - Emphasis was made to laboratories that they should utilize all forms of communication per their own protocols and refer any suspect BT agent to SLI for confirmation and/or rule-out.
 - All communications were to be prefaced with “This is a drill.”

❑ Exercise Results

Panel	Expected Results	Aggregate Results	Percent Correct Results
1	<i>Bacillus sp.</i> not <i>anthracis</i>	17 of 18 labs answered this correctly	94.4%
2	<i>Bacillus sp.</i> unable to rule-out <i>anthracis</i> refer to State Laboratory	14 of 18 labs answered this correctly	77.7%
3	<i>Bacillus sp.</i> not <i>anthracis</i>	17 of 18 labs answered this correctly	94.4%

- These results were sent to the hospitals along with individual results for their own laboratory on 9/7/04

❑ **Exercise Results (continued)**

- ✓ After the drill, a follow up conference call was held on 9/14/04 with the participating laboratories to discuss aggregate results and the “expected” results of each challenge. Emphasis was placed on adhering to the LRN protocols for the presumptive identification or rule-out of suspect agents.
- ✓ Laboratories were given the opportunity to discuss the overall drill outcomes, ask questions and provide feedback and suggestions for future drills.

❑ Exercise Results (continued)

✓ 11 hospitals participated in the call

➤ Discussion Outline included:

- Introductions to the SLI director and personnel involved in the drill
- Case break down on each culture and expected work-up
- Expected drill outcomes
- Problematic issues (**individual hospital results and/or test issues or difficulties were kept confidential**)
 - motility – misinterpreting wet mount or hanging drop; using questionable tube motility media
 - using methods **NOT** recommended in LRN protocols
 - lecithinase
- Questions from the laboratories
 - There was only one question regarding tube motility media recommendations

SENTINEL LABORATORY TRAINING UPDATE

- ✓ Continuation of the Sentinel (Level A) Laboratory training course “Agents of Bioterrorism: Level A Laboratory Training”
 - Monthly classes have been scheduled for 2005
 - FBI now presents a Chain Of Custody presentation during the training day
 - Information has been updated to all of the continued presentations and a new presenter has been added
- ✓ Internet access for microbiology laboratories so they may participate in the on-line BT proficiency
- ✓ Registering and training Sentinel laboratories on the HAN.
- ✓ Continuation of the “Packaging and Shipping Diagnostic Specimens and Infectious Substances” course

“Agents of Bioterrorism: Level A Laboratory Training”

2005 Course Dates:

January 12, 2005

January 26, 2005

February 9, 2005

March 9, 2005

April 6, 2005

April 20, 2005

May 18, 2005

June 8, 2005

June 22, 2005

September 21, 2005

September 28, 2005

October 5, 2005

November 9, 2005

November 30, 2005

**For Level A Training please contact Garry R. Greer at
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Substances “Packaging and Shipping Diagnostic Specimens and Infectious”

2005 Course Dates:

February 16, 2005

March 23, 2005

April 13, 2005

May 11, 2005

June 15, 2005

July 13, 2005

September 14, 2005

October 19, 2005

November 16, 2005

December 14, 2005

Please register at www.mass.gov/dph/bls